

Flag's Modest Rescuer

STATINTL

Adger Emerson Player

Special to The New York Times

ACCRA, Ghana, Feb. 10—"I don't know what all this fuss is about," Adger Emerson Player said last week when informed that a member of Congress had recommended him for the Freedom Award, the highest United States honor for a civilian. The "fuss" began last Tuesday,

when Mr. Player Man bulled through a crowd of Ghanaian demonstrators who in the News were about to tear up the United States flag outside the American Embassy. He grabbed the halyard just as the flag was about to touch the ground and ran the flag back up the pole.

For this action Mr. Player received two more notices today: a personal letter from President Johnson praising him for his bravery and vilification by The Ghanaian Times.

When Mr. Player was told of the medal suggested by Representative Oliver P. Bolton, Republican of Ohio, he remarked with a shrug:

"I just happened to be the closest. Anybody would have done the same thing."

'It's All Been Exaggerated'

As for talk about getting a medal:

"It's all been exaggerated. I just hope it doesn't go any farther. It would cheapen the award to equate what I did as being worthy of such an honor."

Such modesty is typical of Mr. Player, a 31-year-old Negro with the build of a half-back and the manner of a scholar.

Born May 6, 1932, in Denver, he attended East Denver High School, managed a B-minus average and went out for football, basketball and baseball "but I never got a letter in anything."

When he was admitted to the University of Colorado at Boulder there was no question but that he would have to work to pay his tuition. Moses Player, his 70-year-old father, was gassed in France in World War I and receives disability pension. His mother worked as a cook at Colorado Woman's College in Denver.

Studied in Germany

College, he recalls, was much the same as high school: "Got the same B-minus majoring in international relations and played the same football, basketball and baseball without winning a letter."

While at Boulder he took part in demonstrations in support of the sit-ins in the South and he picketed in the boy-



Associated Press

Nonplused by the "fuss"

cott campaign directed at the Woolworth chain.

Armed with a B.A. and a scholarship, he went to Germany and studied a year at Erlangen University near Nuremberg, then served two years as an enlisted man in the Army in Germany and France. He already spoke Spanish and his years in Europe gave him fluent German and French.

After discharge he returned to Boulder, where he took an M.A. in political science, concentrating on Africa. This time he avoided sports and managed nearly straight A's. He also met Barbara Brown, a girl from Okmulgee, Okla., who was teaching at the Convent of the Good Shepherd School for Delinquent Girls in Denver. Five months after the first date they were married.

Takes a 'Dull' Job

That was in 1960. He took a "dull" job in Washington doing research on French-speaking Africa for the Army. But he didn't stay long. In 1962 he was accepted into the Foreign Service as a noncareer officer.

Ghana is Mr. Player's first post. He and his wife now have two children, Marzella, 3, and Monte, 9 months, who was born in Accra.

Mr. Player works in the embassy's political section. "But the staff is so small you have a hand in everything," he said. "Economics. Labor. The legal side of things."

"And of course," he added, "things are happening here."